

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Keeping Families Together

Programs in the following 7 Areas:

1) Bergen County; 2) Burlington County; 3) Hunterdon, Mercer, Somerset, and Warren Counties; 4) Monmouth County; 5) Ocean County; 6) Morris and Sussex Counties; and 7) Union County

Questions? Email us anytime at dcfaskrfp@dcf.state.nj.us

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Please Note: Additional information on the Keeping Families Together model, the federal demonstration (*Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families with Child Welfare Involvement*), and the national evaluation of the federal demonstration sites being conducted by the Urban Institute can be found at:

Corporation for Supportive Housing: <http://www.csh.org/csh-solutions/serving-vulnerable-populations/families/>

Center for the Study of Social Policy: <http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/child-welfare-and-supportive-housing-resource-center>

Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/>

1. I am wondering if the Proposal for the KFT is only for Non-for-Profit agencies, or are For-Profit agencies allowed to apply as well?

Applicants must be universities (State or private) or not-for-profit corporations that are duly registered to conduct business within the State

of New Jersey. You may partner with a not-for-profit or university but the lead must meet the requirements.

- 2. Do clients who receive tenant based vouchers need to be involved with KFT to continue to receive the voucher? What if they move out of County?**

DCF's expectation is that most families will remain involved with KFT programming, though services are voluntary. Skilled service providers who are able to meet families where they are at typically see families engage in the wrap around services and supports. Families must remain in county for the first year, and may move out after they maintain tenancy after year one. KFT services are expected to remain in place as appropriate and may transfer to the KFT service provider in that county.

- 3. Is there an opportunity for sponsor based vouchers? If sponsor based voucher can the sponsor also have ownership of the unit?**

No.

- 4. When applying for multi County program (Somerset, Hunterdon, Warren, and Mercer) is there a determined amount of vouchers for each County?**

Not at this time.

- 5. Does housing have to be located in each of the identified areas? If 4 counties are in the area to be covered can housing be clustered in two of counties and still serve all four?**

No. Providers must work with families to identify their housing goals and preferences and support them in searching for and selecting a housing unit that meets their needs within the area.

- 6. Please clarify ability to achieve full operational census. Is this having trained staff in place and ready to fill apartments or is this apartments filled?**

Applicants need to have appropriate staff in place within sixty days to begin engaging families who are referred to the KFT program.

- 7. Please confirm that the cost of housing vouchers is provided by DCF/DCA and is independent of the operational cost funding and specific assistance to client funding in the RFP.**

The dollars awarded in through this RFP are for operational costs and specific assistance to clients. It does not include funding for housing vouchers.

- 8. There is a significant difference in funding across counties/regions with an equivalent difference in numbers to be served at one time. However, housing 75 families (= one + per day 7 days/week) at top end regardless of staffing resources within 60 days of contract execution does not seem realistic. How was this benchmark established?**

Our benchmarks have been established based upon our experience. We do wish to clarify that applicants need to have appropriate staff in place within sixty days to begin engaging families who are referred to the KFT program. It is not expected that awarded service providers will house all clients within 60 days of contract execution.

- 9. Can more specifics be provided as to how the families are selected for the Keeping Families Together program? Are grantees able to select families that meet the eligibility criteria?**

Per page 7 and 8 of the RFP, CP&P Local Offices in consultation with the grantee and DCF program lead(s) for KFT will identify families who are eligible for the KFT program. The target population for this program is a subset of high needs CP&P involved families whose challenges with homelessness or housing instability along with other co-occurring challenges, have put their children at risk of out of home placement. In consultation with the DCF KFT program lead(s), CP&P and the grantee will jointly conference identified families to determine which are eligible and appropriate for this program.

- 10. What are the parameters that will determine how long the families maintain the vouchers? What happens after 5 years and what is the likelihood of the vouchers being extended?**

DCF will assess on a case by case basis the five year limit. Funding is subject to approval of the appropriations act. Providers must work with clients to ensure they apply for permanent housing vouchers. (Please refer to page 9 in the RFP)

- 11. For multi-county grants, will families be able to use their voucher in both counties?**

Providers must work with families to identify their housing goals and preferences and support them in searching for and selecting a housing unit that meets their needs within the area.

12. For multi-county grants, are grantees required to house families in ALL of the assigned counties?

Yes. Providers must work with families to identify their housing goals and preferences and support them in searching for and selecting a housing unit that meets their needs within the area.

13. For multi-county grants, will participating families originate exclusively from those counties? Will families also originate from other counties?

Initial referrals for KFT must originate from CP&P LO's within the identified counties.

14. What is the expectation regarding how often Keeping Families Together staff will visit the families vs. DCP&P staff?

Applicants should refer to the RFP and propose a staffing model and program approach that will meet the needs of the target population.

15. Can the Keeping Families Together grantee lease the housing to the vouchered families?

Yes, this is possible if the grantee owns appropriate housing units that consumers have an interest in. Applicants who are interested in these arrangements must make sure that their KFT staff is positioned to advocate for the tenants and that housing management staff are separate from KFT staff.

16. Each KFT region is assigned “up to” a certain number of vouchers. How will the final number of vouchers be determined?

The final number of vouchers is tied to the size of families referred.

17. The RFP states “applicants must demonstrate their experience and/or ability to secure appropriate housing and assist families with moving into housing quickly.” Define “quickly.”

Once a family receives a voucher, providers have up to 60 days to work with the family to secure housing.

18. Who approves the housing units for occupancy?

The NJ Department of Community Affairs and any local approvals as required.

19. It appears the vouchers are valued at rates set by the NJ Department of Community Affairs Housing Choices Voucher Program. Can additional funding be available for more competitive housing markets?

No.

20. In reference to “the minimum number of families grantees must serve at one time”, is that one time as in one funding period/year, or the caseload must never fall below 20?

For each area, the number of vouchers available represents the minimum number families grantees must serve at one time with the available funds.

21. How many vouchers are available at once?

Please refer to page 2 of the RFP for the number of vouchers that are estimated to be available per area. These numbers could fluctuate slightly depending on the size of units that are leased up in a given area.

22. Can apartments be in another county that we are not awarded to service?

No.

23. Can this program service undocumented families who cannot obtain vouchers?

No.

24. Can excess amount of money per family (i.e. unused furniture funds) be used towards a security deposit, moving fees, or other start-up costs?

This would be determined on a case by case basis. It has not been DCF's experience to date that there are leftover furniture funds. See Funding Information in RFP that starts on page 15.

25. What is the number and qualifications of each staff member? What are the primary roles and responsibilities of clinical KFT staff? Is peer support staff required?

Please refer to page 11 of the RFP for information on staffing.

26. Can families be involved with Family Preservation Services and other overlapping programs concurrently?

Yes this is possible, but the awarded KFT provider should be working with the family and CP&P to ensure that the services and supports provided to a family are not duplicative of KFT.

27. Is there a minimum frequency of providing services? Is there a maximum length of stay? Are there any specific interventions that need to be utilized?

Applicants should refer to the RFP and propose a staffing model and program approach that will meet the needs of the target population.

28. Are costs related to purchasing a vehicle allowable in the budget? And is either a purchase or lease permissible?

Reasonable operational startup costs (one time) are permitted, and all startup costs must be funded with anticipated contract accruals. Applicants must provide a justification and detailed summary of anticipated startup costs. (Please refer to page 16 in the RFP.)

29. May costs be included in the budget for client transportation expenses such as a monthly bus pass and/or uber/lyft/taxi ride?

Yes.

30. Are 'bridge funds' an allowable budget item, such as utilities payments for clients to avoid shut-offs?

Client assistance funds can be leveraged for this purpose as needed. DCF strongly recommends that, to the extent possible, housing units with utilities included be utilized. Providers should also be actively working to identify community resources and utility assistance programs to assist clients as needed.

31. Am I able to use my realtor for letters of interest from property owners?

No. Applicants must submit at least one letter of interest from property owners and/or landlords who have rental properties in the applicable area.

32. Do I need a Tax Exempt Certificate?

Yes.

33. Is it required to submit a Letter of Commitment or Letter of Interest?

A letter of interest is required. Applicants must submit at least one letter of interest from property owners and/or landlords who have rental properties in the applicable area.

34. Do we need to use HMIS for this RFP?

No.

35. The vouchers are portable after 1 year, correct?

Yes, the vouchers are portable within New Jersey after 1 year.

36. For this RFP, it states that only a 'letter of interest' is required. That means an MOU is not required, but would strengthen our proposal, correct?

An MOU is not required for this RFP. Applicants must demonstrate that they have access to or a viable plan to gain access to appropriate housing units and are well positioned to directly support families in searching for and selecting housing. An MOU appropriate for the KFT-RAP may strengthen a proposal. The MOU should acknowledge that the landlord or developer understands that clients may be referred with criminal backgrounds, poor credit, and eviction histories.

37. If an agency has its own rental units, could that agency provide its own letter?

Yes.

38. Is the agency required to submit one letter of interest for each county in an Area that covers multiple counties?

One letter is required for each county or if the landlord covers multiple counties that will suffice.

39. What is the average time from referral to move-in?

This time varies but usually takes about 4-6 weeks.

40. We should be using SRAP from DCA, correct?

The KFT Rental Assistance Program will mirror the S-RAP program rules and requirements.

41.To clarify reasonable start-up costs, would the rehabilitation of an existing agency owned property be considered a reasonable start-up cost?

No. Reasonable start-up costs do not include rehabilitation. They would include office furniture, office computers etc.

42. How are utility costs managed and evaluated? Will the maximum costs for the utility allowance be posted for each unit size?

These costs vary by county, unit size and unit type; but are based on the HUD chart and payment standards that are used as a guideline. The DCA standard also considers whether utilities are included in the rent. Please refer to the HUD Utilities Allowance attachment which details the estimates used by DCA regarding utility allowances.

43.Does DCA have restrictions regarding criminal background?

DCA has lifetime restrictions for the following 2 types of convictions: sex offenders and manufacturers of methamphetamines in a public housing unit.

44.Will there be operational support for the provision of clinical services, for example case management? Is the agency responsible for funding these clinical services?

Yes. Operating costs may include salary for clinical staff, if the position is part of the applicants staffing model.

45.What do you envision clinical staff doing if we want to avoid ‘over-servicing’ and duplication of services, for example IIC?

We see the clinical staff working within a team to assist families with identifying the services they need to achieve their goals, address underlying needs, linking them to quality services and providing in-home individual or family therapy as appropriate.

46.Are there minimum qualifications, licensing and/or educational qualifications for the clinical staff?

No qualifications have been identified for clinical staff for this RFP.

47.Is there an end-point or cut-off point identified for these services?

No.

48. The family must consent to clinical services which are not voluntary, correct?

KFT services are voluntary.

49. Do we need to submit 1 proposal for each region?

Yes.

50. Are start-up costs included?

Additional start-up funds are not available. However, reasonable operational start-up costs (one-time) are permitted, and all start-up costs (one-time) must be funded with anticipated contract accruals. Please see page 16 for more details.

51. Is there a potential HIPAA or 42 CFR part 2 violation in sharing a family's substance use history with a potential landlord during the application process?

DCF encourages you to consult counsel on this issue because we do not provide agencies with legal advice. Sharing of family history or background should be done in consultation and with full support of the client. Typically, the family would sign a release in order to share this information, as well as take part in a conversation in which the background check process would be explained to them. If a family is participating in KFT, they will understand the need to share certain points of information in order to assist with the housing application process.

52. What happens if a family member relapses and poses a potential risk to the children while in the KFT program?

In New Jersey, any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or acts of abuse should immediately report this information to the State Central Registry (SCR). KFT staff should be proactive in working with families who are at risk of relapse and work with them to plan for what will happen if or when this occurs. DCF and CP&P will work with the provider and the family as appropriate to try and maintain stability for the children involved.

53. Who pays a landlord's application fee?

The awarded providers should expect to pay for any required application fees.

54.If a family is homeless prior to entering the KFT program and needs temporary emergency housing (for example- hotel stay), who is responsible for the cost of the temporary emergency housing?

These costs would typically be covered all or in part by the family, CP&P or other social service agencies.

55.Is a landlord expected to hold a unit while the agency works on getting a family situated?

The time between approval of the DCA application and the actual move-in date should be about 2 weeks. We are not asking the landlord to hold a unit before the application is approved.

56.Will there be a representative from both DCF and DCA for each county?

Yes.